



# Lose weight before your op and get well sooner

If you are waiting for an operation and are very overweight or obese, it's very important you try to lose some weight. Being very overweight or obese increases your risk of complications during and after surgery. You can reduce this risk by losing a healthy amount of weight before your surgery.

## Important information

### What is BMI?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is the relationship between your height and weight. If your BMI is greater than 30 then you are medically defined as being obese.

For example: you have a BMI of 30 if you are 5 feet 3 inches high (160cm) and weigh 12.1 stone (77.3kg) or 6 feet (183cm) and weigh 15.7 stone (100kg).

**Patients with a high BMI can be more at risk of developing complications when they go into hospital for an operation. If you can lose even 5% 10% of your weight, this can reduce some of the risk associated with anaesthesia.**

The Royal College of Anaesthetists, between 2011 and 2014 undertook audits of NHS patients called NAP 4 & 5 which showed that in patients with a high BMI there was an increased risk of complications during general anaesthesia.

### What can you do?

It is important to lose weight sensibly, coupled with exercise. Crash diets are not helpful and are more likely to cause your weight to yo-yo.

Lifestyle referral schemes are available on the CCG's website:

[www.hambletonrichmondshireandwhitbyccg.nhs.uk](http://www.hambletonrichmondshireandwhitbyccg.nhs.uk)

There are also commercial weight reduction schemes, which have been shown to be successful.

**If your BMI is above 35 and you have other medical problems such as diabetes or your BMI is more than 40, you may wish to talk to your GP about a referral to a "tier 3" weight management service. They will give more intensive support.**

### What are the risks?

- **Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or blood clots in your leg veins**

This can be more serious if a part of the clot breaks off and enters the lungs (pulmonary embolism).

- **Low Oxygen Levels**

With excess fat your heart has to work harder to pump blood around the body. Your body uses up the available oxygen more rapidly which means you have lower oxygen reserves during a general anaesthetic.

- **Pain relief complications**

It may take longer and be more uncomfortable to get a cannula (thin tube) in a vein. Other anaesthetic procedures such as an epidural or spinal anaesthetic may be more difficult to perform.

- **Possible delays to discharge from hospital**

Anaesthetists are trained to care for patients with a high BMI. They may need to undertake additional assessments and make plans to minimise any risks to obese patients. Never the less the risk will still be higher than for patients with a healthy weight. Sensible weight loss before surgery will reduce the risks.

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## What are the health consequences of a high BMI?

**Excess weight adversely affects both mental and physical health.**

**People who are obese compared to those with a healthy weight are at increased risk from serious diseases and early death including:**

**Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)**

**Type 2 Diabetes**

**Coronary Heart Disease**

**Stroke**

**Cancer**

**Gall Bladder Disease**

**Osteoarthritis (joint pain)**

**Mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression**

**Sleep apnoea**

### So why lose weight?

The World Health Organisation estimates that having too high a BMI is responsible for 21% of the cases of ischaemic heart disease, 23% of ischaemic stroke, 58% of type 2 diabetes and 39% of hypertension.

**The good news is that losing some weight can reduce these risks. Not everyone can get to their ideal weight, but losing 5% to 10% of your weight can deliver meaningful health benefits.**